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THE NAZI MASTER PLAN

ANNEX 4: THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Description

This study describes, with illustrative factual evidence, Nazi purposes, policies and methods of persecuting the Christian Churches in Germany and occupied Europe.

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DRAFT FOR THE WAR CRIMES STAFF

6 July 1945

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Presentation dtd. D Zablodowski

TO: Major William Geogan

20 July 1945

FROM: Lt. (jg) Carl E. Schorske, USNR

SUBJECT: RSA 3114.4, THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

In the interest of rapid distribution to the Staff of the War Crimes Prosecution in the field, the attached study is presented in unedited draft form. The document is still seriously lacking in evidence of probative value, and is consequently ill-suited to serve as a basis for any international discussion.

Care has been taken to cite primary sources (Reichsgesetzblatt, Zeitschrift, etc.) wherever possible. Secondary works are cited only where the authors of such works did not cite original sources and where more solid evidence was unavailable from other sources. German legislation as represented in the Reichsgesetzblatt has been fully covered. The correspondence of Bishop Wurm, referred to on pages 52 and 61, is in process of translation and will be forwarded as an appendix when completed.

Particular attention is called to the appended list of probable witnesses. These should be contacted as quickly as possible. It is suggested that the interrogators be briefed by a thorough study of the attached document, and that they be cognizant not only of the weaknesses made explicit in the text but also of other weaknesses suggested by critics in the field.

It will be noted in particular that much of the material on the persecution of the Catholic Church has been obtained from a secondary work entitled The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, Burns Oates, London, 1940. This volume contains much valuable material, but is poorly documented. Its author is not identified. It would be most profitable if a member of the staff in London could discover the author or authors through Burns Oates, the publisher, and secure the more solid documentary evidence which must be in his or their possession.

Presentation

37

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

	Page
I. THE NATURE OF THE PERSECUTION	1
II. THE PROBLEM OF ESTABLISHING CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY	1
A. Acts Committed in Germany Proper	1
B. Acts Committed in Areas Incorporated into the Reich	3
C. Acts Committed in Other Occupied Areas	3
III. THE BASIC NATIONAL SOCIALIST ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRISTIAN CHURCHES	4
IV. POLICIES ADOPTED IN THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES	7
A. Policies Adopted in Germany Proper	7
1. The Catholic Church	10
a. The Period Prior to the Seizure of Power	10
b. The Period from the Seizure of Power to the Signing of the Concordat	11
c. The Period Following the Signature of the Concordat	17
2. The Evangelical Church	19
a. The Period of German Christian Predominance	19
b. The Period of Direct Administration	23
3. The Christian Sects	26
B. Policies Adopted in the Incorporated Areas	27
C. Policies Adopted in Other Occupied Areas	27
V. METHODS USED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY OF PERSECUTION	29
A. Interference with the Central Institutions of Church Government	29

	Page
1. The Direct Seizure of Central Institutions of Church Government	30
a. The Seizure of the German Evangelical Church	30
b. The Seizure of the Norwegian National Church	30
2. Interference with the Normal Operation of Central Institutions of Church Government	31
a. Legal Abolition of Central Institutions of Church Government	32
i. Prohibition of Certain German Sects	32
ii. Prohibition of the Central Governing Organs of the German Confessionals	33
b. The Imposition of Financial Controls upon the Operation of Church Governments	34
c. Interruption of Official Communications within the Church Government	36
i. Cases in Germany Proper	37
ii. Cases in the Incorporated Areas	39
B. Interference with the Persons of the Clergy and of Lay Workers	40
1. The Murder of Church Leaders	41
a. Cases in Germany Proper	41
b. Cases in the Incorporated Areas	41
c. Cases in the Occupied Areas	42
2. The Assaulting of Church Leaders	42
a. Cases in Germany Proper	42
b. Cases in the Incorporated Areas	49
3. Defamation of the Clergy	51
4. Arrest of the Clergy	51

	Page
a. Cases in Germany Proper	52
b. Cases in the Incorporated Areas	54
c. Cases in the Occupied Areas	55
i. Cases in Norway	55
ii. Cases in the General Government of Poland	55
5. Removing Clergymen from Office	56
a. Cases Involving Protestant Clergymen	56
b. Cases Involving Catholic Clergymen	57
C. Interference with the Activities of the Clergy	59
1. The Closing of Church Buildings	59
a. Cases in Incorporated Areas	59
b. Cases in Occupied Areas	59
2. Interference with Freedom of Speech and Writings	60
a. Cases Involving the Catholic Church	62
b. Cases Involving the German Evangelical Church	66
3. Interferences with the Educational Functions of the Clergy	68
a. The Closing of Theological Seminaries	68
i. Cases in Germany Proper	69
ii. Cases in Incorporated Areas	70
iii. Cases in Occupied Areas	70
b. The Closing of Denominational Schools	71
c. The Elimination of Religious Instruction from Other Schools	75
D. Interference with Christian Organizations	76
1. Religious Orders	78
a. Interferences with Religious Orders in Germany Proper	79
b. Interferences with Religious Orders in Incorporated Areas	81

Page

2. The Youth Movement 82

3. Other Church Organizations 84

VI. ORGANIZATIONS BEARING PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERSECUTIONS 85

VII. LIST OF CHIEF WITNESSES IN THE CASES CONCERNING PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES 91

VIII. APPENDIX. WARTIME DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE WÜRTTEMBERGISCHE LANDESKIRCHE

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

I. THE NATURE OF THE PERSECUTION

Throughout the period of National Socialist rule, religious liberties in Germany and in the occupied areas were seriously impaired. The various Christian Churches were systematically cut off from effective communication with the people. They were confined as far as possible to the performance of narrowly religious functions, and even within this narrow sphere were subjected to as many hindrances as the Nazis dared to impose. These results were accomplished partly by legal and partly by illegal and terroristic means.

II. THE PROBLEM OF ESTABLISHING CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

To establish criminal responsiblity in connection with this persecution it is sufficient to show that measures taken against the Christian Churches were an integral part of the National Socialist scheme of world conquest. In many cases it is also possible to show that the measures in question were criminal from the standpoint of German or of international law, depending on the region in which any given act was committed.

A. Acts Committed in Germany Proper

By Articles 135 (freedom of faith and conscience), 136 (right to the enjoyment of civil and political rights

independent of religious creed), 137 (freedom of religious association and incorporation), 138 (commutation of state contributions to religious bodies), 139 (legal recognition of Sundays and public holidays), 140 (right to carry out religious work in the Army and public institutions) and 149 (maintenance of religious instruction in the German educational system) of the Weimar Constitution, which were never formally abrogated by the National Socialist regime, many basic rights were granted to religious organizations. Although Articles 114 (freedom of the person), 115 (freedom from searches and seizures), 117 (secrecy of communication), 118 (freedom of speech and of the press), 123 (freedom of assembly), 124 (freedom of association) and 153 (rights of property) were suspended on 28 February 1933[1], Articles 135-40 and 149 were left untouched, and still remain theoretically in force. Respect for the principle of religious freedom was reiterated in various official pronouncements by Nazi leaders.[2] Specific religious liberties were also guaranteed in various enactments of the National Socialist state, particularly the Concordat of 20 July 1933.[3]

1. By the Decree of the President of the Reich for the Protection of the People and the State, RGBl. I (1933) p. 83.
2. See below p 12-13.
3. RGBl. II (1933) p. 679. For an English translation see The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (London, Burns Oates, 1940) p. 516-22.

To demonstrate the illegality of specific acts of persecution, it is sufficient to show that they were in violation of these legal provisions.

B. Acts Committed in Areas Incorporated into the Reich

The legal situation with regard to acts of persecution in these areas depends upon the attitude taken concerning the legal effect of incorporation. If it is assumed that incorporation actually took place, religious guarantees included in the Weimar Constitution, the Concordat and other German enactments would presumably apply to the incorporated territories. In that case the problem of establishing the illegality of acts of persecution committed in these areas subsequent to incorporation[1] would be the same as in the case of acts committed in Germany proper. If it is assumed that the act of incorporation, as an incident of aggressive warfare, was invalid and without legal effect, the problem of establishing the illegality of acts of persecution committed in these areas would be the same as in the case of acts committed in other occupied areas, considered below.

C. Acts Committed in Other Occupied Areas

The rights and duties of the Nazi authorities in these regions were governed by the provisions of international law, particularly Article 46 of the Hague Regulations (1907) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, which provides that "religious convictions and practice must be respected."

1. Austria was incorporated 13 March 1938. Western Poland was incorporated 26 October 1939. See special memorandum The Incorporation and Annexation of Territories by Nazi Germany.

To demonstrate the illegality of specific acts of persecution in these areas, it is sufficient to show that they constituted a violation of these provisions.

III. THE BASIC NATIONAL SOCIALIST ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

National Socialism by its very nature was hostile to Christianity and the Christian churches. The purpose of the National Socialist movement was to convert the German people into a homogeneous racial group united in all its energies for prosecution of aggressive warfare. Innumerable indications of this fact are to be found in the speeches and writing of Hitler and other responsible Nazi leaders. The following statements by Hitler may be taken as indicative.

"Every truly national idea is in the last resort social, i.e., he who is prepared so completely to adopt the cause of his people that he really knows no higher ideal than the prosperity of this - his own people, he who has so taken to heart the meaning of our great song 'Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles' that nothing in this world stands for him higher than this Germany, people and land, land and people, he is a Socialist!" (Speech given in Munich, July 28, 1922, translation from Adolf Hitler, My New Order, edited by Raoul de Roussy de Sales, Reynal and Hitchcock, New York, 1941, p. 39)

"Even today we are the least loved people on earth. A world of foes is ranged against us and the German must still today make up his mind whether he intends to be a free soldier or a white slave. The only possible conditions under which a German State can develop at all must therefore be: the unification of all Germans in Europe, education towards a national consciousness, and readiness to place the whole national strength without exception in the service of the nation." (Speech given in Munich, April 10, 1923, translation from Hitler, ibid, p. 28)

"If cowards cry out: 'But we have no arms!' that is

neither here nor there! When the whole German people knows one will and one will only - to be free - in that hour we shall have the instrument with which to win our freedom. It matters not whether these weapons of ours are humane: if they gain us our freedom, they are justified before our conscience and before our God." (Speech given in Munich August 1, 1923, translation from Hitler, ibid., p. 65)

"The conception of pacifism translated into practice and applied to all spheres must gradually lead to the destruction of the competitive instinct, to the destruction of the ambition for outstanding achievement. I cannot say: in politics we will be pacifists, we reject the idea of the necessity for life to safeguard itself through conflict - but in economics we want to remain keenly competitive. If I reject the idea of conflict as such, it is of no importance that for the time being that idea is still applied in some single spheres. In the last resort political decisions are decisive and determine achievement in the single sphere." (Speech given before the Industry Club at Dusseldorf, January 27, 1932, translation from Hitler, ibid., p. 101.)

"There can be no economic life unless behind this economic life there stands the determined political will of the nation ready to strike - and to strike hard." (Same speech, p. 111)

"We National Socialists once came from war, from the experience of war. Our world ideal developed in war; now, if necessary, it will prove itself." (Speech given at the Sportpalast, Berlin, on October 10, 1939, translation from Hitler, ibid., p. 759)

Although the principal Christian Churches of Germany had long been associated with conservative ways of thought, which meant that they tended to agree with the National Socialists in their authoritarianism, in their attacks on Socialism and Communism, and in their campaign against the Versailles treaty, their doctrinal commitments could not be reconciled with the principle of racism, with a foreign policy of unlimited aggressive warfare, or with a domestic policy involving the complete subservience of Church to State. Since these

were fundamental elements of the National Socialist program, conflict was inevitable.

Important leaders of the National Socialist party would have liked to meet this situation by a complete extirpation of Christianity and the substitution of a purely racial religion tailored to fit the needs of National Socialist policy. This radically anti-Christian position is most significantly presented in Alfred Rosenberg's Myth of the Twentieth Century (one of the great best-sellers of National Socialist Germany and generally regarded, after Hitler's Mein Kampf, as the most authoritative statement of National Socialist ideology), and in his To the Obscurantists of our Time (An die Dunkelmaenner unserer Zeit). Since Rosenberg was editor in chief of the chief party newspaper, the Voelkischer Beobachter, the Reich Leader of Ideological Training and the possessor of other prominent positions under the National Socialist regime, his ideas were not without official significance. Thus in a declaration of 5 November 1934, Baldur von Schirach, German Youth Leader declared in Berlin; "Rosenberg's way is the way of German youth."1 So far as this sector of the National Socialist party is concerned, the destruction of Christianity was explicitly recognized as a purpose of the National Socialist movement.

1. Cited in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, (London, Burns Oates, 1940), p. 83.

Considerations of expediency made it impossible, however, for the National Socialist government to adopt this radical anti-Christian policy officially. Thus the policy actually adopted was to reduce the influence of the Christian Churches as far as possible through the use of every available means, without provoking the difficulties of an open war of extermination. That this was an official policy can be deduced from the following record of measures actually taken for the systematic persecution of Christian churches in Germany and in German occupied areas.

IV. POLICIES ADOPTED IN THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The nature of the influence exercised by the Christian Churches varied considerably in the various regions under National Socialist control. Policies adopted in an attempt to counteract that influence were correspondingly varied.

A. Policies Adopted in Germany Proper

Persecution of the Christian churches in Germany proper gave rise to very special problems. Since Germany was destined to provide the central force for the coming wars of aggression, it was particularly necessary that the German people be withdrawn from all influences hostile to the National Socialist philosophy of aggression. This meant that the influence of the Christian churches would have to be minimized as thoroughly as possible. On the other hand, the predominantly conservative and patriotic influence exerted

by the larger Christian churches was a factor of some positive value from the National Socialist standpoint, and insured those churches a substantial measure of support from conservative groups destined to play an important part in the National Socialist plans for aggression. Persecution of the Churches in this region had therefore to be effected in such a way as to minimize their effective influence without breaking the unity of the German people, and without destroying the capacity of the churches to fullfill their historic mission of conservative social discipline. This could only be accomplished, at least the case of the major Christian churches, by a slow and cautious policy of gradual encroachment.

In accordance with this necessity, the Nazi plan was to show first that they were no foes of the Church, that they were indeed interested in "Positive Christianity," were very good friends of the Churches and did not at all want to interfere in religious matters or with the internal affairs of the different denominations. Then under the pretext that the Churches themselves were interfering in political and state matters, they would deprive the Churches, step by step, of all opportunity to affect German public life. The Nazis believed that the Churches could be starved and strangled spiritually in a relatively short time when they were deprived of all means of communication with the faithful beyond the Church building themselves, and terrorized in such a manner that no Churchman would dare to speak out openly against Nazi

policies. This general plan had been established even before the rise of the Nazis to power. It apparently came out of discussions among an inner circle comprising Hitler himself, Rosenberg, Göring, Goebbels, Hess, Baldur von Schirach, Frick, Rust, Kerrl and Schemm. Some Nazi leaders or sympathizers, and some later collaborationists who were faithful Catholics or Protestants, such as von Epp, Buttmann and von Papen, may have been left in ignorance of the real aim of Nazi church policy.

The Problem of Proof. The best evidence now available as to the existence of an anti-Church plan is to be found in the systematic nature of the persecution itself. Different steps in that persecution, such as the campaign for the suppression of denominational and youth organizations, the campaign against the denominational schools, the defamation campaign against the clergy, started on the same day in the whole area of the Reich or in large districts, and were supported by the entire regimented press, by Nazi Party meetings, by traveling Party speakers. As to direct evidence, the directives of the Reich Propaganda Ministry, if they have not been destroyed, would be most authoritative. If they have been destroyed, questioning of Nazi newspapermen and local and regional propagandists might elicit the desired evidence. It is known that Hitler used to discuss the plans of his political action with those members of his inner circle who were especially concerned with the respective problems. Rosenberg, Göring, Goebbels, Frick, Rust, Baldur von Schirach, Kerrl

and Schemm are the leading Nazis who took a special interest in the relationship of State and Church. (See Hermann Rauschning, in his chapter on Hitler's religious attitudes in The Voice of Destruction, and Kurt Ludeke, I Knew Hitler. Both witnesses, however, are to be used with caution.)

But even though the basic plan was uniform, the opportunities for carrying it into effect, and hence the specific policies actually adopted, differed substantially from church to church. The principal churches to be considered in this connection are the following:

1. The Catholic Church. National Socialist relations with the Catholic Church fall into three clearly marked periods.

a. The Period Prior to the Seizure of Power. During this period the relations between the Nazi Party and the Catholic Church were extremely bitter. As an opposition Party, the National Socialists had always violently attacked "Political Catholicism" and the collaboration of the Center Party with the Social Democrats in the Reich and Prussian governments, declaring that they could find no difference among the so-called Systemparteien (parties which collaborated in the system of constitutional government). On 8 March 1933, Göring in a speech at Essen summed up the Nazi attitude toward the Center as follows: "Each time the red robber was about to steal some of the German people's properties, his black accomplice stood thieves' watch."[1] On their

1. Essener Nationalzeitung and other German newspapers for 9 March 1933.

part, the German bishops, stigmatizing the Nazi movement as anti-Christian, forbade the clergy to participate in any ceremonies, such as funerals, in which the Nazi Party was officially represented, and refused the sacraments to party officials. In several pastorals they expressly warned the faithful against the danger created to German Catholicism by the Party.[1]

b. The Period from the Seizure of Power to the Signing of the Condordat. During this period, the main concern of the new regime was to liquidate the political opposition. Their strategy was to convince conservatives that the efforts of the government were being directed primarily against the Communists and other forces of the extreme left, and that their own interests would remain safe in Nazi hands as long as they would consent to refrain from political activity. Immediately after their rise to power, therefore, the Nazis made unmistakable overtures to the Churches, and tried to convince the Catholic hierarchy in particular that after the dissolution of the Center Party and some Catholic organizations of more or less political character, such as the Friedensbund deutscher Katholiken, no obstacle could remain in the way of complete reconciliation between the Catholic church and the Nazi state. The German Catholic bishops, influenced by the experiences of their Italian colleagues, whose relations with the Fascists

1. See declarations of the German bishops on the Reichstag elections of July and November, 1932, quoted in the German press, especially in such Catholic papers as Germania, Koelnische Volkszeitung and Rhein- Mainische Volkszeitung.

under the Lateran Treaty of 1929 had been fairly smooth, accepted the Nazi proposition. Pour parlers for a Reich Concordat started immediately.

Meantime the Nazi government abrogated all laws and regulations of the Republic protecting non-denominational groups of the population and abolished the right to pursue anti-religious and anti-Church propaganda. The Prussian government closed the so-called secular (weltliche) schools in which no religious instruction was given and re-established religious instruction in professional and vocational schools.[1] All organizations of free-thinkers were forbidden. When the Reichstag elected on 5 March 1933 convened, the government organized religious ceremonies for the Protestant and the Catholic members of Parliament.[2]

And in his speech before the Reichstag, to which he presented his government, Hitler declared: "While the regime is determined to carry through the political and moral purging of our public life, it is creating and ensuring the prerequisites for a really deep inner religiosity. Benefits of a personal nature, which might arise from compromises with atheistic organizations, could outweigh the results which become apparent through the destruction of general basic religious-ethical values. The national regime seeks in both Christian confessions the factors most important for

1. See Cuno Horkenbach, Das Deutsche Reich von 1918 bis heute (Berlin 1935, Presse- und Wirtschaftsverlag GmbH) p. 66.
2. Ibid., p. 124.

the maintenance of our folkdom. It will respect agreements concluded between them and the states. Their rights will not be infringed upon. Conversely, however, it expects and hopes that the national and ethical uplifting of our people, which the regime has taken for its task, will enjoy a similar appreciation. The national regime will concede and safeguard to the Christian confessions the influence due them, in school and education. It is concerned with the sincere cooperation of church and state. The struggle against a materialistic philosophy and for the creation of a true folk community serves the interests of the German nation as well as our Christian belief."[1]

Under such circumstances, the conference of German bishops, meeting as usual in Fulda, decided on 28 March 1933 to lift all restrictions imposed on members of the Church adhering to the Nazi movement.[2] This opened the door to mass adherence to the Party of practicing Catholics. The rush started immediately. All those German Catholics who were inclined to adopt Nazi political views and had hesitated only because of the anti-Nazi attitude of the hierarchy hastened now to join the victorious party of the "national revolution." Former members of the Center Party's right wing, who had always advocated collaboration with the parties to the right of the Center and with the German nationalist movements established themselves now as so-called "bridge-builders" trying to explain ideological affinities between the anti-liberal character of Catholic politics and the Nazi system. They insisted especially on

1. Ibid., p. 133.
2. Ibid., p. 146.

the fact that the Church was guided like the Nazi movement by the leadership principle.[1] They were soon joined by turn-coats from the left wing of the Center and the Catholic youth movement, persons who insisted that the "socialist" and anti-capitalist character of the Nazi doctrine coincided marvellously with their own views on the necessity of social reform.

In order to remind the Catholics of the danger of not coming to an agreement with the Nazi state, a certain amount of pressure was at the same time maintained against them. A thorough job was done in purging Reich, state and municipal administrations of officials appointed for their adherence to the Center or Bavarian People's parties. Former leaders of those parties, including priests, joined Communist and Social Democrat leaders in the concentration camps, and the campaign of hatred against the "black" was resumed.[2] By April 1933 the bishops were making appeals for clemency toward former civil servants who, they pointed out, were not able to join the celebration of national awakening because they had been dismissed from positions in which they had given their best to the community of the German people. And on 31 May 1933 a meeting of the Bavarian bishops adopted a solemn statement directed against the tendency of attributing to the state alone the right of

1. See the program of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholischer Deutcher, ibid., p. 436 and 504. See also the declaration of Archbishop Groeber, ibid., p. 463.

2. See ibid., p. 186, 263, 268.

educating, organizing and leading ideologically the German youth.[1] A few weeks later, on 18 June 1933, the breaking up in Munich by Nazi hordes of a manifestation of the Catholic Journeymen Associations (Gesellenvereine) became the starting point of a Nazi propaganda campaign against alleged efforts to keep "Political Catholicism" alive.

Tension was mounting again when news that a Concordat had been signed on 8 July 1933 in Rome between the Holy See and the German Reich seemed to alter the situation completely. For the first time since the Middle Ages the Reich itself had entered into an agreement with the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, the new treaty was apparently entirely to the advantage of the Church. In return for the retreat of German Catholicism from the political scene, demonstrated by the self-dissolution of the Center Party[2] and the synchronization (Gleichschaltung) of the Catholic press[3], an official guarantee was given the Church in the form of an international treaty, of all the church rights that "Political Catholicism" had fought for: freedom for Catholic organizations, maintenance of denominational schools, and preservation of the general influence of the Church on the education of the German youth.

Among the 33 articles of the Concordat, 21 treated exclusively rights and prerogatives accorded to the Church;

1. See Persection of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich p. 516. See also Norkenbach, ibid., p. 170.
2. See Norkenbach op. cit. p. 275.
3. See the Law Concerning Editors of 4 October 1933 (RGBl., I (1933) p. 713).

reciprocation consisted only in a pledge of loyalty by the clergy to the Reich government and in a promise that Catholic religious instruction would emphasize the patriotic duties of the Christian citizen and insist on a loyal attitude toward the Fatherland. Since it had always been the practice of the Catholic Church to abide by established governments and to promote patriotic convictions among the faithful, these stipulations of the Concordat were no more than legalizations of an existing custom.

The Concordat was hailed by Church and State authorities as marking the end of a period of distrust and suspicion and the beginning of close and fruitful collaboration. Hitler himself advised the State and Party officials to adopt a friendly attitude toward the Catholic Church and its institutions on German soil. He expressed the wish that Catholic organizations, now under the protection of a treaty of friendship between Nazi Germany and the Holy See, should no longer be regarded by his followers as symbols of an effort to remain outside the national community and to form a way of life apart from the official line of the totalitarian Third Reich.[1]

1. Statement of 8 July 1933. Quoted in Nathaniel Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church (Oxford University Press, 1939) p. 69.

c. The Period Following the Signature of the Concordat. During this period, relations between the Nazi state and the Catholic church became progressively worse. Having gained the support of the Catholic hierarchy in the crucial early days of the regime by signing the Concordat, they took advantage of their subsequently increasing strength to violate every one of the Concordat's provisions, gradually stripping the Church of all its more important rights. Specific instances of the various phases of this persecution are presented in Section V below.

By 1937 it had become clear that the Nazi state was not to be appeased by Catholic efforts to accommodate the Church and the State in the form of a Concordat, and that Hitler's government had no intention to adhere to its part of the document. Convinced, therefore, that the Church had been in error, in the face of the irreconcilability of its teachings with those of National Socialism, in abandoning its earlier opposition to the movement, the Church resumed its controversy with Nazi doctrine, while continuing to suffer from Nazi practice.

The new campaign may be considered to have been inaugurated by Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical of 14 March 1937, entitled "Mit brennender Sorge",[1] which by underground means was spread by Catholic youth throughout Germany and was first published to the world in the original German text

1. English translation in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 523.

by a reading (21 March 1937) from all Roman Catholic pulpits in Germany. Pope Pius XI denounced the violation of the Concordat by the Nazi state. He described the actions of the Nazi government against the church as "intrigues which from the beginning had no other aim than a war of extermination....In the furrow of peace in which we had labored to sow the seeds of true peace, others ... sowed the tares of suspicion, discord, hatred, calumny, a secret and open fundamental hostility to Christ and his Church, fed from a thousand different sources and making use of every available means."

The support of the Holy See encouraged some of the German bishops, either in courageous sermons, diocesan pastorals, or in their collective pastorals issued usually from Fulda, the seat of their annual conferences, to protest vigorously against both Nazi ideology and practice. Especially notable in this work were Cardinal Faulbaber of Munich, Bishop von Preysing of Berlin, and Bishop von Galen of Münster. Among the more notable protests were the Pastoral issued from Fulda on 19 August 1938,[1] the Fulda Pastoral of 1941, which was read from all pulpits on 6 July 1941, the Fulda Pastoral of 22 March 1942 and the Fulda Pastoral of 19 August 1943.[2] In spite of these protests, there is no

1. Substantial excerpts in English are to be found ibid, p. 30-4.
2. All these pastorals are certainly available in the offices of every German diocese.

evidence that the Nazis were in any way deterred from their campaign, in violation of the Concordat, to destroy the position and influence of the Catholic Church in Germany.

2. The Evangelical Church. Unlike the Catholic Church, the Evangelical churches of Germany were organizations whose supreme administrative organs were located within the borders of Germany. Among the Evangelical clergy and laity there was also a substantial group, the more extreme members of which were known as the German Christians, who were entirely in accord with the purposes of the National Socialist government. With regard to the Evangelical churches, therefore, the policy of the National Socialists was not simply, as in the case of the Catholic Church, to limit the activities and influence of the church organization, but to capture and use the church organization for their own purposes. The attempt to accomplish this purpose falls into two main periods.

a. The Period of German Christian Predominance. The essential strategy of the first period of the National Socialist government was to impose highly centralized organs of administration upon the German Evangelical Church, and to place the exercise of the powers thus created in the reliable Nazi hands of German Christians. In this way it was hoped to secure the elimination of Christian influences in the Evangelical Church by legal or by quasi-legal means.

The campaign began with a congress of German Christians, held at Berlin on 3-4 April 1933[1] which declared itself in favor of a united Evangelical Church organized according to the leadership principle and the tenets of the Party (including anti-Semitism). One of its leaders was the army chaplain, Ludwig Müller, a friend of Hitler, who on 25 April was appointed the Führer's representative "with full powers to deal with the affairs of the Evangelical Church" in its relations with the state.[2] Yielding to the clamor for unification, the Committee of the German Church Confederation on 23 April 1933 authorized its president, Dr. Kapler, to carry through a reorganization of the constitution of the Church. After the constitution had been accepted by the Council of the Church Federation and representatives of the Landeskirchen it was published on 14 July 1933 by the Government of the Reich, together with a law recognizing the new German Evangelical Church as a corporation of public law.[3] The essential purpose of this legislation, while ostensibly leaving the Landeskirchen independent in matters of confession and worship, was to create a central administrative organ, headed according to the leadership principle by a Reich Bishop, and vested with complete power to control administrative and legal activities of the Church.

1. Hortenbach, ibid. p. 157.
2. Ibid., p. 185.
3. RGBl., I (1933) p. 471.

To insure the use of this powerful new machinery for the accomplishment of Nazi purposes, it was necessary that it be placed in the hands of reliable German Christians. Typical Nazi pressures were therefore used to control the election of the first Reich Bishop. Before the election, German Christian control of the Evangelical Church in Prussia was insured by the appointment by Dr. Rust, Prussian Kultusminister, of a State Commissioner for Church Affairs in Prussia. This official, Dr. Jäger, was a German Christian, and through his sub-commissioners for the church provinces of Prussia he took the administration of the Church virtually out of its own hands.[1] In preparing the elections for the national synod which was in turn to elect the Reich Bishop, it is said that the clergy were not allowed to exercise their traditional right to limit the voters to active church members.

The night before the election Hitler intervened with a radio address strongly supporting the German Christians.[2] The result was a victory for the German Christians. On 5 September their candidate Müller was elected to the entirely new office Bishop of Prussia by a General Synod of the Protestant church of Prussia in a session dominated by a German Christian majority,[3] and in which 75 members of the opposition who desired to protest were not allowed the floor

1. Ibid., p. 262-3.
2. For the German text, see ibid., p. 300. For an English translation, see Hitler, IMT., p. 185-8.
3. Horkenbach, ibid., p. 370.

and withdrew from the Synod. On 27 September Müller was elected Reich Bishop by the National Synod, and proceeded to fill the central administration with other German Christians, such as Bishop Schöffel of Hamburg, and Pastor Hossenfelder of Elberfeld, leader of the German Christians and Vice President of the Prussian Supreme Church Council.[1]

The new administration proceeded as rapidly as possible to use its powers for the accomplishment of the Nazi Church program. Various measures were taken to impair the freedom of the clergy, and to secure the dissolution of religious associations. (For specific details, see Section V below.) In his attempt to integrate the various Landeskirchen, Müller was aided by Dr. Jäger, formerly State Commissioner for Church Affairs in Prussia, who in April 1934 was taken into the Spiritual Council as legal member and head of the Church Chancery. On 9 August 1934 Müller summoned a National Synod packed with Nazis to Berlin. It transferred all its powers to Müller and prescribed a form of oath for all pastors and church officials.[2]

In spite of the formidable legal powers vested in the Reich Bishop, the attempt to control the Evangelical Church by these means failed. The Churches of Hannover, Württemberg and Bavaria, under the leadership of their respective bishops

1. Ibid, p. 418.
2. Gerd Rühle, Das Dritte Reich (1934) Hummerlverlag, Berlin, p. 383.

Marahrens, Wurm and Meiser refused to yield to pressure, and were supported by a vast majority of their pastors. When Wurm and Meiser were placed under house arrest, public demonstrations occurred in their support.[1] On 28 October 1934 a civil court declared all of Jäger's acts in Bavaria to have been illegal.[2] Opposition finally crystallized in the so-called Confessional Church, made up of the Churches of Bavaria and Württemberg and representatives of protesting Evangelical clergymen in other parts of Germany. On 29-31 May 1934 and 20 October 1934 the first and second Confessional Synods of the Evangelical Church of Germany were held at Barmen and at Dahlem respectively,[3] and succeeded in uniting a large part of the German Evangelical Church in protest against the doctrines and Church policies of the Reich Bishop. Obviously the attempt to make the Church a united agency for the accomplishment of Nazi purposes had failed. Thus Reich Bishop Müller, although never being forced officially to resign his position, was gradually superseded by other agencies of Nazi control, and faded from the scene.

b. The Period of Direct Administration. Around the middle of 1935, a new attempt was made to establish unity within the German Evangelical Church, this time by the use of Government authority rather than through the agency of the German Christians operating within the Church Government. To

1. Reported in the foreign press. Evidence should now be available from the bishops themselves, or from members of their dioceses.
2. Citation unavailable here.
3. Reports of these events were kept out of the press. Details should now be available from Niemöller and other Confessional leaders.

this end the powers of the government in Church affairs were strengthened. On 26 June 1935 a Law on the Settlement of Legal Questions Arising in the Evangelical Church[1] deprived the Evangelical churches of their right to sue before the regular courts, and set up a special administrative court (Beschlussstelle) with the power of final decision in such matters. This deprived the Churches of the rights of self-administration and protection in the civil courts to which as corporations of public law they were entitled under Article 137 of the Weimar Constitution. On 16 July 1935 Hitler announced the creation of the post of a Reich Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs.[2] One of the first acts of the new minister, Dr. Hanns Kerrl, was to transfer the Beschlussstelle from the Ministry of Interior to his own jurisdiction. On 27 July 1935 he made himself president of this special court. On 24 September 1935 the organization of the ministry was further developed by a Law for the Safeguarding of the German Evangelical Church[3] by which "The Reich Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs is empowered, for the restoration of orderly conditions in the German Evangelical Church and the Regional Evangelical Churches, to issue ordinances with binding legal force." On 20 March 1937 the Minister for Church Affairs delegated the administration of the Church to Dr. Werner, president of the Church Chancery of the German Evangelical Church.[4] On 10 December 1937 the

1. RGBl.,I (1935) p. 774.
2. Rühle, Das Dritte Reich (1935) p. 301.
3. RGBl.,I (1935) p. 1178.
4. RGBl.,I (1937) p. 333.

appointment was made permanent, and he was authorized to promulgate ordinances on all church matters except questions of faith and worship.[1] Thus the exercise of control over the entire Church administration was placed in the hands of Government appointees. In this way formal legal validity was given to all subsequent acts directed against the German Evangelical Churches.

The principal victims of the ensuing persecution were members of the Confessional Church. At first an attempt was made to conciliate them by the appointment on 14 October 1935 of church committees, on which friends of the Confessional Synod were represented, for the government and administration of the Churches.[2] Although some of the protesting Landeskirchen were thereby reconciled, many of the Confessionals refused to accept the authority of these committees. This was met with a series of repressive measures against the Confessional Church. On 2 December 1935 the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs declared their central organs (Provisional Church Government, and the Council of Brethren of the Confessional Synod) illegal.[3] On 2 December 1935 the authority of the Church Ministry was expressly denied by Dr. Niemöller, leader of the Confessionals.

In May 1936 the leaders of the Confessional Church addressed a memorandum to Hitler denouncing the anti-Christian

1. RGBl., I (1937) p. 1346.
2. Rühle, Das Dritte Reich (1935) p. 304. Authority for the appointment of these committees was given in the ordinance of 3 October 1935 (RGBl., I, p. 1221.)
3. Ibid., p. 306. Authority for this action was given in an ordinance of the same date (RGBl., I (1935) p. 1370).

acts of the government.[1] When this was met with further acts of repression, the failure of the church committees to effect a reconciliation was admitted by Ecclesiastical Minister Kerrl, in a report to Hitler. From that time onward the official attitude was that the Confessional Church was illegal, and its activities were persecuted to the point where they became almost completely ineffective. For specific instances of this persecution, see the following section.

3. The Christian Sects. Certain of the smaller Christian sects, especially the Jehovah's Witnesses (Ernste Bibelforscher) and the Pentecostal Association (Freie Christengemeinde) were particularly objectionable from the Nazi standpoint because of their advanced pacifist views. Since they were without important influence at home or abroad, it was possible to proceed against them more drastically than against the larger Christian Churches. Both groups were therefore declared illegal[2] and there were times when almost no adherent of either group was outside a concentration camp.[3] For specific instances of this persecution see below, p. 32-33).

1. Not reported in the current German press. Evidence should be obtainable from Niemöller and other Confessional leaders.
2. This was done not on a national but on a local basis. Thus the dissolution in Hesse was accomplished by an ordinance of 18 October 1933 issued by the Hesseschen Staatsministeriums and published in the official Darmstadter Zeitung. (See J.W. (1934) p. 1747).
3. See Micklem, op.cit. p. 51, and Franz Zuercher, Kreuzzug gegen das Christentum (Zürich, 1938, Europa-Verlag).

B. Policies Adopted in the Incorporated Areas

In areas like Alsace-Lorraine or western Poland, and to some extent in Austria, where the Nazis were attempting to incorporate a substantial non-German population into the body of the Reich, local church organizations were feared primarily as potential centers of national resistance to German domination. The policies adopted against the Churches in these regions were therefore particularly severe, the most seriously afflicted being western Poland. A summary statement of the measures taken in these regions, together with a vigorous protest against them, is to be found in the memorial of 15 December 1942 addressed to the German Minister for Church Affairs, the German Minister for the Interior and the Chief of the Chancery by the German Catholic bishops assembled at Fulda.[1] For specific details see Section V below.

C. Policies Adopted in other Occupied Areas

In other occupied areas, which were designed to support but not to take a leading part in the Nazi campaign of world conquest, the need to impose a unified Nazi philosophy was less great than in other regions. Thus there was no general motive for persecution in these areas. In regions, like Slovakia, where the Churches proved generally cooperative with the occupying authorities, they were officially favored.

1. Not available here. Should be obtainable in the offices of German dioceses.

But in countries where the spirit of national resistance was widely supported by the local churches, the Nazis felt no compunction about persecuting them vigorously. The countries to suffer most in this respect were the General Government of Poland and occupied Norway. For specific instances of persecution in these areas see below, Section V.

V. METHODS USED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY OF PERSECUTION

In order to implement their general policy of persecution, the National Socialists interfered at every possible stage in the activities of the Christian Churches. Sometimes they accomplished their purposes by direct intervention of the Reich or Land governments under their control or, in the case of Norway and other occupied but unincorporated areas, by intervention of a native puppet government. At other times they preferred to accomplish their purposes through the use of the SA, the Hitler Youth and other Party organizations. The principal forms of intervention were the following.

A. Interference With The Central Institutions Of Church Government

The easiest way to achieve rapid results in the destruction of the Christian Churches was to paralyze their central institutions, and thus deprive them of the advantages of central leadership. This was accomplished either by the direct seizure and exploitation of those institutions by Nazi or pro-Nazi personnel, or by interference with the effective operation of those institutions which could not be thus subjected to seizure and exploitation.

1. The Direct Seizure Of Central Institutions Of Church Government. This could be most easily accomplished in the case of Christian Churches which had a long tradition of dependence upon state authority. This aspect of the persecution was generally carried out through the forms of law, without the necessity for any important admixture of illegal action. The most important cases of this sort were the following:

a. The Seizure Of The German Evangelical Church. The steps whereby legal control over the central governing institutions of the German Evangelical Church was established, first on behalf of German Christian supporters of the Nazi government, later on behalf of the Nazi government itself, are outlined above pp. 19-26)

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The major steps in this process are a matter of legal record. The principal laws and ordinances by which the seizure was accomplished are cited above.

b. The Seizure Of The Norwegian National Church. The Evangelical Lutheran State Church, to which 98.6% of the population adhered, was a state church established by royal decree. C hurch affairs were handled by the Department of Church and Education. When the Germans invaded the country and set up a Reichskomissar for the occupied Norwegian territories,[1] they gained control over this central organi-

1. Deutsche Verordnungsblatt für Norwegen, April 20 - May 6, p. 2.

zation. Pro-Nazi Norwegians were placed in charge of the Department of Church and Education, subsequently replaced by the Ministry for Culture and Enlightenment. These powers were exercised in such a way that the entire Norwegian pastorate, with insignificant exceptions, decided on Easter Sunday, 1942, to make joint resignation of their public offices and salaries,[1] thus proclaiming their conviction that the central institutions of the state church were no longer available for the accomplishment of Christian purposes.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Although native Norwegian collaborators played the principal role in the persecution of the Norwegian church, it is a matter of legal record that final control over and hence final responsibility for their actions rests with the German Reichskomissariat for Norway. All necessary evidence with regard to the course of the church conflict in Norway can no doubt be obtained from Norwegian church authorities.

2. Interference with the Normal Operation of Central Institutions of Church Government. In the case of the Catholic and of some Protestant Churches, the Nazis were unable to gain control of the central institutions of Church

1. Neue Zuricher Zeitung 4/1/42.

government. In these cases they tried as far as possible to prevent those central institutions from operating. The methods used were more or less drastic, depending on the circumstances.

a. Legal Abolition Of Central Institutions Of Church Government. In accord with the generally cautious policies adopted by the Nazis in their campaign for the persecution of the Christian Churches, this device was sparingly used. The principal cases are the following.

i. Prohibition Of Certain German Sects. Under the Nazi regime the organization and activities of the Ernste Bibelforscher and Freie Christengemeinde were declared illegal. They were rigorously suppressed by the police.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. For general references, see above, p. 26). The dissolution of the Jehovah's Witnesses was declared in violation of Article 1937 of the Weimar Constitution in a case decided on 26 March 1934 by the Special Court of Darmstadt (Juristische Wochenschrift (hereafter abbr. J. W.) 1934, p. 1747). Most courts, however, upheld the decision of the government. For cases illustrating some of the ways in which members of this sect were persecuted, the following court decisions should be consulted:

(1) Refusal of a peddler's license. Bayerischer Verwaltungsgerichtshof, 8 May 1936 (Reger, Vol. 37, p. 533); (2) Refusal of a permit to practice as a midwife. Sächsisches Oberverwaltungsgericht, 4 December 1936 (J.W. 1937, p. 1368); (3) Dismissal of a postal clerk. Reichsdienststrafhof, 11 February 1935 (Zeitschrift für Beamtenrscht 1936, p. 104); Refusal of the right to conduct family worship in the home. Reichsgericht, 17 February 1938 (J.W. 1938, p. 1018); Removal of children from the custody of their parents. Landgericht Hamburg, 6 May 1936 (Jgdrecht u. Jgdwohlfahrt 1936, p. 281).

ii. Prohibition of the Central Governing Organs of the German Confessionals. On December 20, 1935 the Provisional Church Government and the Council of Brethren of the Confessional Synod were specifically declared illegal by the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs. Although the repressive measures actually taken were not sufficient to prevent these groups from acting, this ruling prevented them from enjoying the privileges of public law corporations, to which the Evangelical Church was entitled under existing German law.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See above, p. 25-26)

b. The Imposition Of Financial Controls Upon The Operation Of Church Governments. The principal Christian Churches of Germany had long derived their main financial support from state collected church taxes. To maintain effective control over these organizations it was therefore sufficient to deprive them of all other sources of revenue, and to impose state restrictions upon the expenditure of state collected funds. The Sammlungsgesetz of 5 November 1934[1] which placed severe restrictions on the right of churches and other organizations to solicit contributions was an important hindrance to the financial independence of all churches.

i. Financial Control Of The German Evangelical Church. The establishment of machinery for financial control played a major part in the Nazi capture of the German Evangelical Church organization. Under earlier German law local church authorities had exercised considerable authority in determining the rate of and allocating the revenues from church taxes. On 11 March 1935 the Prussian government deprived the Prussian church of this power by setting

1. RGBl., I, (1934) p. 1086

up state controlled finance departments for the management of the finances of all Evangelical churches in Prussia. By ordinance of 25 June 1937[1] state controlled finance departments were set up for the German Evangelical Church and for each of the Provincial Churches, with the right to regulate the conditions of service of all officials of the general church administrations, of the pastors and of the local parish officials and employees. By an ordinance of 9 June 1937 it was provided that all church collections had to be subject to the approval of the central church authorities.[2] Since the control of the central authorities of the German Evangelical Church was in Nazi hands this meant that all Protestant congregations, including those Confessional congregations which had been maintained by voluntary contributions, could be deprived of all financial support at the discretion of the Nazi authorities.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The legislation by which this control was exercised is a matter of record. For a specific instance of the way in which the resulting power was exercised, see below, Case 1.[3]

1. RGBl., I, (1937) p. 697.
2. Citation unavailable here.
3. Citation unavailable here.

CASE 1. THE FINANCIAL COERCION OF THE DAHLEM PARISH. The Dahlem parish of the German Evangelical Church, being located in a fashionable part of Berlin, was comparatively prosperous. It enjoyed an income of around 400,000 marks, half of which exceeded its immediate needs. When its pastor, Dr. Niemöller, leader of the Confessionals, was dismissed from his pastorate by the Reich Bishop Müller on 1 March 1935, the congregational assembly refused to obey the order, and asked him to continue to serve. They refused to transfer their income to the central church offices, and devoted about half of it to the Confessional Church. The transfer was finally enforced, however, by a commissioner appointed by the finance department.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence should be obtainable from Dr. Niemöller, and from other serving members of the parish.

c. Interruption of Official Communications within the Church Government. The effective operation of any large organization depends on the maintenance of free and confidential communication between officials. This right was guaranteed for the Catholic Church in Germany by Article IV of the Concordat, which reads "In its relations and correspondence with the bishops, clergy and other members of the Catholic Church in Germany, the Holy See enjoys full freedom. The same applies to the bishops and other diocesan

officials in their dealings with the faithful in all matters belonging to their pastoral office." Violations of this right played an important part in the total Nazi scheme for the persecution of the Christian Churches. As early as 1935 the bishops were made to realize that their correspondence and telephone calls were subject to constant surveillance by the police.[1]

The following cases might repay investigation.

1. Cases in Germany Proper.

CASE 2. In February, 1937 Dr. Zöllner, the Chairman of the Reich Church Committee, was prevented by the police from visiting nine Confessional Pastors of Lübeck who had been arrested by the secret police. This interference with his attempted conciliation led to the resignation of Zöllner and his committee on 14 February 1937.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence should be obtainable from serving Confessional leaders.

CASE 3. When the bishop of Wuerzburg, Mgr. Ehrenfried, travelled to Rome in November 1938, he was held up on the German frontier and had to stand by while all his luggage and documents were searched. Photostats were made of everything written in Latin.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 3 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 42. Since Mgr. Ehrenfried is alive and still bishop of Wuerzburg it would be easy to have himself as a witness.

1. See: The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 42.

CASE 4. In 1936 the offices of the Diocesan Administration of Freiburg im Breisgau were raided by the Gestapo.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 4 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p.41. Archbishop Groeber and every member of the Diocesan Administration of Freiburg who held his position prior to the reported incident might be witnesses.

CASE 5. In 1937 fifty officials of the Gestapo searched the offices of the Administration of the Archdiocese of Cologne.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 5 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 41. Every member of the diocesan administration who held his position prior to the reported incident is a potential witness.

CASE 6. In 1937 the offices of the Vicar General in Aachen were searched.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 6 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 42. Every member of the diocesan administration who held his position prior to the reported incident is a potential witness.

CASE 7. On 31 August 1938 Cardinal Faulhaber's offices in Munich were searched.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 7 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich. page 42. Cardinal Faulhaber and every member of the diocesan administration who held his position prior to the reported incident might be a witness.

CASE 8. On 15 April 1939 the offices of the Bishop of Limburg on the Lahn were searched. The archives of certain ecclesiastical foundations were confiscated and carried away, together with the money belonging to them.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 8 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 42. Mgr. Hilfrich, bishop of Limburg and every member of the diocesan administration who held his position prior to the reported incident might be a witness.

CASE 9. In the Diocesan Administration buildings in Berlin the German bishops had set up an Information Bureau under the direction of Mgr. Banasch. This office was raided in December 1935. All papers were examined, and Mgr. Banasch was arrested and held in jail until March 1936.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 9 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich. Count v. Preysing, Bishop of Berlin, Mgr. Banasch himself and every member of the diocesan administration who held his position prior to the reported incident could be witnesses.

ii. Cases in the Incorporated Areas

CASE 10. In 1938 a search was carried out in the ordinariates of Vienna, Salzburg and Seckau.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 10 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich page 42.

Cardinal Innitzer, Bishop Pavlikowski and every member of the three diocesan administrations who held his position prior to the reported incidents might be witnesses.

B. Interference with the Persons of the Clergy and of Lay Workers

Insofar as it was not possible or prudent to control the Churches through their central administrative aparatus, it was possible to cripple their work by intimidating or eliminating those clergymen or lay workers who were attempting to carry out church policies. So far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the rights of the clergy to special protection were guaranteed in Article V of the Concordat, which read "In the exercise of their spiritual activities the clergy shall enjoy the protection of the State in the same way as State officials. The state will take proceedings in accordance with the general provisions of State law against any outrage offered to the clergy personally or directed against their ecclesiastical character, or any interference with the duties of their office, and in case of need will provide official protection." In spite of this, interferences with the personal security of the clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, and of leading lay workers of the Churches was very freely used as a means of hampering the activities of the Christian Churches. This was accomplished by the following means:

1. The Murder of Church Leaders. In line with their generally cautious policies of Church persecution, the Nazis were somewhat sparing in the use of these means. The official Nazi policy was expressed by Robert Wagner, Gauleiter of Baden, when he said "The Catholic church need not imagine that we are going to create martyrs. We shall not give the church that satisfaction -- she shall have, not martyrs, but criminals."[1] Even within the borders of Germany proper, however, there were some instances of the murder of Church personalities, and in the incorporated areas, where the reactions of public opinion were less to be feared, the numbers of such cases were quite substantial.

a. Cases in Germany Proper. The cases in this category most worthy of investigation are the deaths of the Catholic leaders Klausener, Beck and Probst. They are considered in detail on pages 8-10 of the report on "Criminal Responsibilities in Connection with the Purge of 1934", R&A No. 3113.1.

b. Cases in the Incorporated Areas. The murder of large numbers of Catholic priests is reported by the Polish Ministry of Information in London as having occurred in the incorporated regions of western Poland.[2] Since no sufficient

1. In a speech delivered at Loerrelch (Baden) in the fall of 1935, as quoted in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich.
2. See: The Nazi Kultur in Poland, London, 1945, p. 9-11.

details are given, it would be necessary to get in touch with the informed Polish authorities in order to prepare specific cases. The possibility that patriotic Polish priests may actually have been engaged in acts against the occupying authorities will somewhat complicate the problem of proving persecution in these instances.

c. Cases in the Occupied Areas. The murder of numbers of Catholic priests is reported by the Polish Ministry of Information in London as having occurred in the incorporated regions of western Poland.[1] The problem of proof is the same as in section ii above.

2. The Assaulting of Church Leaders. In order to hamper the church leaders in carrying out their work, they were frequently subjected to actual or threatened personal violence. The SA, the SS, the Hitler Youth and other Party organizations were most frequently used in carrying out this aspect of the persecution.

a. Cases in German Proper.

CASE 11. Bishop Dr. Sproll of Rottenburg, absent from his diocese because of the disturbances caused by his having failed to vote in the elections of 10 April 1938, returned to his residence on 15 July 1938 on instructions from the Holy See. The next day demonstrations started in which about 100 young people, members of the Hitler Youth, took part. Few

1. See: Polish Information Service, "The Nazi Kultur in Poland," London, 1945, p. 19-20.

of them were from Rottenburg itself. The demonstrators forced an entrance into the Bishop's residence through the chancellery. A group of them came shouting and yelling into the Bishop's private chapel, where he knelt before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. They hesitated and withdrew, making contemptuous remarks. So did another party when they saw the Bishop in prayer. Finally, the editor of the Flammenzeichen of Stuttgart, with five other men, appeared and tried in vain to persuade the Bishop to leave the town. Mean while, the rest of the intruders ransacked the offices and private belongings of the Bishop. Finally the mob marched off, singing the Horst Wessel Song and "Deutschland ueber Alles". Next day a representative of the Gestapo visited the Bishop and told him to leave Rottenburg, threatening that otherwise the demonstrations would be repeated. The Bishop replied: "I have strict orders from the Holy See to return to my diocese. I am the Bishop of Rottenburg, and I shall remain in Rottenburg, even if I lose my life in doing so."

On 18 July another demonstration occurred. This time the demonstrators numbered between 1,500 and 2,000 and again the majority are believed to have come from other places.

The bishop's residence was stoned. In the bishop's study alone four large rocks were found.

A third demonstration occurred on 23 July. The demonstrators had been brought to Rottenburg in cars and buses from as much as 30 Miles away. Again the crowd forced its way into the building. In the bishop's private chapel they found the Archbishop of Freiburg, who had arrived in Rottenburg, the Vicar-General and some of the Cathedral canons. They insulted the Archbishop and showed their contempt for the exposed Sacrament by smoking and keeping their hats on. The Bishop was then expelled from his diocese by order of the Ministry of Interior of Rottenburg and left for Freiburg.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence as to the planned nature of these demonstrations is contained in a letter received by Bishop Sproll a few days after the incident, and published subsequently in a Swiss paper.[1] This letter declares: "I was one of those present last Saturday -- not indeed of my own free will, but by order. I have always been proud of my country, but last Saturday I was, for the first time, ashamed to call myself a German. And a number of the comrades of my section think the same way as I do. We were ashamed of ourselves for having -- without our knowledge -- allowed ourselves to be used for such a scandalous affair....By staging this

1. Ostschweiz, 13 October 1938.

demonstration the Party had given us an involuntary proof that you acted rightly on 10 April. The mere fact that the SA had to attend in civilian dress indicated that the Party itself had the feeling that what was happening was not the proper thing for the 'dress of honor' of the SA."

Soon after the departure of the bishop, the Nazi area leader, Dr. Fritsch, declared before a thousand political leaders of the Freiburg district in the Festhalle that "The Archbishop should be thankful that he was still able to reside in his house and had not already received the proper answer to his goings on. This ragamuffin was spreading lying statements in the foreign press, and that was high treason. Here, publicly, I call him a knave, a liar and a traitor to his country."[1]

The "Sproll-incidents" were described in an official ecclesiastical announcement which was read in several German dioceses on the last Sunday of July, 1938. Concerning the last demonstration of July 23rd, Der Deutsche In Polen (Katovice) printed on August 14th, 1938, a copy of the authentic information sent by the diocesan authorities to the Reichminister for Ecclesiastical Affairs.

1. Printed in the Schaffhausener Zietung, Schaffhausen, Switzerland, September 13th, 1938.

Bishop Sproll, Archbishop Groeber, the members of Bishop Sproll's household and the members of his diocesan administration who held office prior to the reported incidents could be witnesses.

CASE 12. On 12 May 1935 the late Archbishop Klein of Paderborn paid a visit to Hamm. On his arrival he was mobbed by the Hitler Youth, members of which tried to overturn his car, spat at him, and attacked with their "daggers of honor" some Catholics who tried to protect him. The address of welcome to the bishop at the St. Agnes-Kirchplatz had to be abandoned. The Nazi manifestation had obviously been carefully prepared. Hitler Youth leaders from Dortmund and Hamm took part in it.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The members of the Catholic clergy of Hamm who were residing in that community at the time of the reported incident could be witnesses. Case 12 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 252.

CASE 13. On 26 May 1934 the Bishop of Trier, Mgr. Bornewasser, was insulted by Hitler Youth at the end of the Confirmation service in Kreuznach.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 13 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 253. Bishop Bornewasser himself could be a witness.

CASE 14. At the beginning of 1935 the murder of Cardinal Faulhaber was demanded in public meetings in Munich. Examples: a meeting of 15 February of the German School Union, at which the Nazi City School Inspector Bauer spoke; a meeting on 17 May of the German Faith Movement; a meeting on 13 June 1935 at which a Dr. Engel of the Ludendorff movement was the speaker.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 14 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 252. Members of the Diocesan Administration of Munich could be witnesses.

CASE 15. In june 1937 the Bishop of Trier, Mgr. Bornewasser, was attacked bodily in the Hunsrueck area.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See, The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 253. Bishop Bornewasser himself could be a witness.

CASE 16. At the end of November 1938, after a speech by a Gauleiter and State Minister Wagner in Munich, uniformed detachments in motor-cars and on motor cycles arrived in front of the Cardinal's residence. A hail of stones was directed against the windows, while the men shouted "Take the rotten traitor to Dachau". Armed with crowbars, the demonstrators shattered the window frames and shutters.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Eye-witness report published in Der Deutsche in Polen of 27 November 1938. Cardinal Faulhaber himself could be a witness.

CASE 17. On 21 September 1935 the walls of ecclesiastical buildings in Freiburg Breisgau were covered with inscriptions insulting the clergy.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Official report of Vicar-General Rösch, 26 September 1935, No. 14091.

CASE 18. In May 1939 abusive demonstrations against Cardinal Faulhaber were renewed in several places in Bavaria, such as Gars, Wang and Muehldorf on the Inn, where at seven or eight points around the town posters were displayed saying "Away with Faulhaber, the friend of the Jews and the agent of Moscow."

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See: The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 262 with Facsimile of the Muehldorf poster on the opposite page. Cardinal Faulhaber himself could be a witness.

CASE 19. On 25 October 1936 members of the Hitler Youth hurled insults at Cardinal Faulhaber as he was entering his car in Giesing, a suburb of Munich.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See: The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 254. Cardinal Faulhaber himself could be a witness.

b. Cases in the Incorporated Areas.

CASE 20. On October 8, 1938 at eight fifteen in the evening demonstrations took place against the residence of Cardinal Archbishop Innitzer in Vienna. Stones were thrown, all windows broken, a heavy door broken. A quarter of an hour later the mob broke in, destroying everything they could find in the antechambers. Reaching the episcopal chapel, they struck a secretary of the Cardinal unconscious, and destroyed the statue of a saint and other property. The purple pectoral cross and ring of the Cardinal were stolen. The Archbishop's Master of Ceremonies was hit on the head with a candelabra. One of the priests was dragged to the window and only just saved from being thrown out. On the rumor that the police were coming they left, first demanding a signed statement from the inmates of the residence that they would never reveal these events. Not one of the intruders, who left singing "Deutschland über alles", was in any way interfered with in going out. The only person arrested was a correspondent of The Times.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. These events were reported in the Osservatore Romano of 15 October 1938. Eight days later, Gauleiter Buerckel of Vienna held a mass meeting on the Heldenplatz, in which he announced that an attempt by the clergy had been made to work the people up to a putsch against the Nazi government, and that therefore some stern measures

had had to be taken. This speech was reported in the Vienna newspapers. Cardinal Innitzer could name eye-witnesses of the Nazi demonstration.

CASE 21. On Friday, 7 October 1938, following a service for Catholic Youth in St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna at which Cardinal Archbishop Innitzer gave the sermon, Hitler Youth and SA gathered outside shouting "Down with Innitzer. Our faith is Germany." Later bands of SA men gathered in front of the bishop's residence and staged demonstrations, shouting that the Cardinal should be taken to Dachau.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. These facts were reported in the Osservatore Romano of October 15, 1938.

CASE 22. On 8 October 1938 a mob broke into a house of the Cathedral Curia in Vienna and, after thoroughly wrecking it, threw a curate Fr. Kravarnik, out of the window. His life was reported to be in danger.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. These events were reported in the Osservatore Romano of 15 October 1938. Diocesan officials in Vienna might serve as witnesses.

CASE 23. In June 1938 when Cardinal Innitzer journeyed through the northern parts of Lower Austria for visitation and confirmation he was subjected to such outrages and mobbings that he decided to break off his journey. In one town the

Cardinal covered his dress with the parish priest's cape and left the church. He was recognized, however, by a teacher who gave the signal for attack, and was bombarded with rotten eggs and potatoes, and struck at with umbrellas.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Case 23 is reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 262. Cardinal Innitzer himself could be a witness.

3. Defamation of the Clergy. In order to reduce the influence of the clergy, systematic propaganda campaigns were carried out to depict them in an unfavorable light. The most vigorous of these campaigns were the press campaigns in connection with the "Currency trials" and the "Clerical immorality trials" of 1935 and 1936, which tried to discredit the Catholic clergy as financial manipulators and moral degenerates. The Catholic church was the principal victim of these tactics.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence here consists in the files of all German newspapers for the period. The extent and sensational coloring of the reports of these trials, quite apart from any case of the guilt or innocence of the particular defendents, is proof of the anti-Church purpose of the campaign, which was underlined in violent outbursts of Hitler and Goebbels themselves made in official speeches. See e pecially the speech made by Goebbels in a mass-meeting in the Deutschlandhalle (Berlin) on 28 May 1937.

4. Arrest of the Clergy. The activities of the clergy were frequently interrupted by arrest and imprisonment. Catholics and Protestants were

equally affected by this form of persecution.

a. Cases in Germany Proper

CASE 24. In 1933 Dr. Jäger as head of the Church Chancery had the Gestapo place Bishop Wurm of Württemberg and Bishop Meiser of Bavaria under house arrest. The latter act was held illegal by court decision.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence not available here. It could no doubt be furnished by the bishops in question.

CASE 25. A prominent protestant clergyman of Stuttgart, Stadtpfarrer Lic. Lempp, prepared a written sermon to be read on Sunday, 12 September 1943 in churches where only lay-readers were available to carry out the services. In this sermon he criticized the government for its persecution of the Evangelical Church in the incorporated areas of western Poland. On 11 September 1943 he was arrested by the Gestapo on orders of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. He was released on 14 September, but forced to pay a fine for "criminal incitement" (verbrecherlicher Volkserhetzung).

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The facts of this case are set forth, and the position of pastor Lempp defended, in a letter of 4 October 1943 addressed by Bishop Wurm of Württemberg to the Reich Minister of the Interior. A translation of this letter is given below in the Appendix, p._____.

CASE 26. In January 1937 nine Confessional pastors of Lübeck, who had disagreed with their German Christian bishop, were arrested by the Secret Police.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence not available here. Could no doubt be obtained from confessional leaders in Germany.

CASE 27. On 1 July 1937 Martin Niemöller, Confessional leader, was arrested and put in prison. On 7 February 1938 he was tried before a Special Court in Berlin. On 2 March he was sentenced to seven months imprisonment in a fortress (i.e. honorable imprisonment) for violation of the Pulpit Law. He was also fined 500 Marks for a violation of the rules of the Emergency Decree of 28 February 1933 (originally directed against the Communists) and 1500 marks for another violation of both laws. He was acquitted of the charge of "underhand attacks on State and Party". As he had been eight months in prison he was allowed to go free. On leaving the court he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to a concentration camp where he remained until the end of the war.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Newspaper reports of the Niemöller arrest and trial. Niemoller himself could be a witness.

CASE 28. In May 1935 the parish priest of Koblenz-Neuendorf was sentenced to six months imprisonment because he had "ridiculed" the Winter Relief Work and the National Socialist Welfare Work.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported in Germania (Berlin) 12 May 1935.

CASE 29. In May 1936 a curate in Mannheim was sentenced to four months imprisonment because he had spoken critically of the Hitler Youth.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported in Kolnische Volks-zeitung, 18 May 1936.

CASE 30. On 16 April 1935 the special court in Schwerin sentenced to one and a half years imprisonment Mgr. Leffers, parish priest of Rostock, for remarks made in a discussion of Rosenberg's Myth with three students, supporters of Ludendorff's anti-Christian movement, who visited him under the pretext that they were seeking spiritual advice.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported in Frankfurter Zeitung, 17 April 1935.

CASE 31. On 22 July 1937 Father Rupert Mayer S.J. was sentenced to six months imprisonment because he did not comply with the prohibition on his preaching imposed by the Gestapo.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See: The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 68 and Appendix III to that book page 538-543.

b. Cases in the Incorporated Areas

CASE 32. In 1938 at Seckau (Austria) Prince Bishop Dr. Pawlikowski was kept under guard for several days by 2 SS men.

CONFIDENTIAL

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See: The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 42. Bishop Pawlikowski himself could be a witness.

i. Cases in Western Poland. The imprisonment of large numbers of Catholic priests is reported by the Polish Ministry of Information in London as having occurred in the incorporated regions of western Poland.[1] Since no sufficient details are given it would be necessary to get in touch with informed Polish authorities in order to prepare specific cases. The possibility that patriotic Polish priests may actually have been engaged in acts against the occupying authorities will somewhat complicate the problem of proving persecution in these cases.

c. Cases in the Occupied Areas.

i. Cases in Norway. The imprisonment and detention in house arrest of large numbers of Norwegian clergymen took place during the Nazi regime. All necessary evidence with regard to these arrests can no doubt be obtained from Norwegian church authorities. The case of Bishop Eivand Berggrav was especially notable.

ii. Cases in the General Government of Poland. The imprisonment of large numbers of Catholic and Protestant clergymen is reported by the Polish Ministry of Information in London as having occurred in the General government of Poland.[2]

1. See: The Nazi Kultur in Poland, London, 1945, p. 10-11.
2. See: The Nazi Kultur in Poland, London, 1945, p. 19-32.

CONFIDENTIAL

5. Removing Clergymen from Office. Without being arrested, clergymen were occasionally removed from office by order of the Nazi authorities. In the case of churches whose central organs of administration were under Nazi control, this could be done by order from the higher church authorities. In other cases, alleged violations of State laws were sometimes punished in this fashion. The use of essentially ecclesiastical penalties for the violation of State law would seem to be of doubtful legality.

a. Cases Involving Protestant Clergymen.

CASE 33. On 1 March 1935 Niemöller dismissed by Reich Bishop from his pastorate in Dahlem.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Niemöller himself could be a witness.

CASE 34. During the Munich crisis of 1938 the Confessionals, through their provisional government of the Evangelical Church, issued an order of a Service of Prayer for Peace. On the grounds that this was a treasonable act, the Reich Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs ordered that the salaries of these Confessionals be stopped, and that they be removed from their parishes.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Evidence would have to be ob-

tained from surviving Confessional leaders, and the file of the Reichs Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs.

ii. Cases Involving Catholic Clergymen.

CASE 35. In the summer of 1938 Mgr. Dr. Sproll, Bishop of Rottenburg, was expelled from his diocese. This measure was justified by the German News Agency (DNB) on the grounds that he "was the only citizen of his locality who failed to participate in the election of April 10th."

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Newspaper reports Bishop Sproll himself could be a witness.

CASE 36. On 27 June 1938 a priest named Vorwerk, the official representative of the Bishop of Muenster for that part of his diocese which lay in the territory of Oldenburg, was expelled because he had protested the conversion of the denominational schools in Oldenburg into Nazi community schools at the order of the Nazi Minister of Public Instruction of Oldenburg.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Pastoral of the Bishop of Muenster, Count von Galen, read from the pulpits on 31 July 1938.

CASE 37. In April 1937 the parish priest of the Cathedral parish in Eichstaett was served with an order of

expulsion. This order was not carried into effect only because the diocesan bishop, Mgr. Rackl, proclaimed from the Cathedral pulpit that he had ordered him not to leave his parish.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Mgr. Rackl himself could be a witness. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (page 44).

C. Interference with the Activities of the Clergy.

When clergymen were not molested in their own person they were frequently prevented from fulfilling the normal functions of their office. The following forms of intervention were particularly frequent.

1. Closing of Church Buildings. This most drastic form of interference with clerical activities was used primarily in the Incorporated and Occupied territories.

a. Cases in Incorporated Areas. The partial or complete closing of large numbers of churches in the incorporated territories of western Poland is reported by the Polish Ministry of Information, London.[1] This statement was confirmed in the memorial of 15 December 1942 addressed by the Catholic bishops of Germany to the German Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs, which said that with a very few exceptions all churches in the Dioceses of Posen and Litzmannstadt had been withdrawn from use for worship and either sealed or used for warehouses or other profane purposes, in one case as a riding school.[2]

b. Cases in Occupied Areas. Although the closing of churches was less frequent in the General Government of Poland than in the incorporated territories, several cases are mentioned by the Polish Ministry of Information, London.[3] The following notable case from Norway should also be mentioned.

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1. See The Nazi Kultur in Poland, London, 1945, p. 14.
2. This memorial is not available here.
3. See The Nazi Kultur in Poland, London, 1945, p. 22-24.

CASE 38. On Sunday, 1 February 1942 the government authorities demanded the use of the Cathedral of Trondheim for a Quisling pastor during the morning hours. Dean Fjellbu therefore decided to postpone the regular worship service until the afternoon. When large crowds sought admission to the Cathedral for this service, the police barricaded all entrances and refused them admission.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported by the Norwegian Information Service, 3516 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, 7, D. C. on January 26, 1945. Although the agency directly responsible was the Norwegian puppet government rather than the German occupying authority, the relations between the two were such that the Germans might be found responsible. The problem of German responsibility for actions of puppet governments is treated in a separate study on Nazi occupation policies and methods.

2. Interferences with Freedom of Speech and Writings. As organizations devoted to the teaching and propagation of Christianity, the Christian Churches are peculiarly dependent upon freedom of speech and writing for the accomplishment of their normal mission. When constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and writings were suspended by the Law for the Protection of People and Reich[1] official assurances were given that the position of the Churches would not be affected. Actual measures of repression started almost immediately. In the fall of 1934 Dr. Frick, Minister of Education, prohibited all discussion of the Church question in the press, in pamphlets or in books. Early the

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1. RGBl I (1933) p. 83.

next year Dr. Frick repeated this order, and Dr. Rust, the Minister of Education ordered the professors of theology in the universities not to participate in the church dispute. On 28 October 1935 the Propaganda Ministry imposed censorship before publication on all church periodicals,[1] and on 30 November 1935 this was extended to all writings and picture material multigraphed for distribution. After 1937 the German Catholic bishops gave up all attempts to print their Pastorals, and had them merely read from the pulpits. They were confirmed in this attitude by a letter from the Reich Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs who threatened any printing of Pastorals "with confiscation by the Gestapo or complete prohibition, as well as further measures on the part of the Reich Minister for Popular Education and Propaganda."[2] After the war, the paper shortage was used as an excuse to enforce the cessation of virtually all church publications.[3] In the case of the Catholic Church, these orders and acts were in violation of Article IV of the Concordat, which read, "Instructions, ordinances, Pastoral letters, official diocesan gazettes and other enactments regarding the spiritual direction of the faithful issued by the ecclesiastical authorities within the framework of their competence (Art. 1, Sect. 2) may be published without hindrance and brought to the notice of the faithful in the form hitherto usual."

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1. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p.76-77.
2. Quoted in a Pastoral of the Bishop of Muenster of 21 December 1936. Not available here, but should be obtainable in the diocesan offices at Muenster.
3. See the letter of protest addressed on 1 April 1942 by Bishop Wurm of the Württembergesche Evangelische Landeskirche to Reichminister Dr. Goebbels, an English translation of which is given below in the Appendix, p.

a. Cases Involving the Catholic Church

CASE 39. On Palm Sunday, 14 March 1937, in most of the parish churches of the Third Reich, the Papal Encyclical letter about the situation of the Catholic Church in Germany (Mit brennender Sorge) was read from the pulpits. Immediately the state proceeded with severe measures of retaliation. Twelve printing offices which had printed the Encyclical were closed without compensation. Parish magazines and diocesan gazettes which had copied the text were banned for three months. All the copies which the police could get hold of were seized. People who had transcribed or even circulated the text were arrested. In the village of Essen in Oldenburg seven Catholic girls who had distributed the Encyclical were taken into custody and released only because of the threatening attitude of the inhabitants.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 59. Witnesses could be members of all German diocesan administrations holding office at that time.

CASE 40. The Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth of 31 December 1929 was reprinted in Huber's printing office in Munich. In March 1937 it was forbidden because of passages it contained about the denominational schools. A Calendar for Catholic parents published in 1935 was seized because some parts of the same Encyclical were quoted in it.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (page 59). A member of the diocesan administration of Munich holding office in 1937 could be witness.

CASE 41. The Nazis gave orders that the reading in Catholic Churches of the Encyclical of October 1939 by Pius XII Summi Pontificatus, was to be noted by the Gestapo, that priests who had a share in it were to be reported, and that steps were to be taken by the police against reproduction and distribution of the text.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See case 39.

CASE 42. On 5 May 1935 a Pastoral Letter of the Prussian Episcopate was issued for what is called "Educational Sunday," dealing with Catholic principles of education. It was forbidden, and such parish magazines as had printed it were confiscated on the grounds that it "contained in several passages intolerable criticism of the Landjahr organization."

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Germania (Berlin) 5 May 1935.

CASE 43. On 21 July 1935 a Pastoral Letter by Bishop Kaller of Ermland, which dwelt on the great importance of Catholic organizations and their current hardships was confiscated before it could be read.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (page 60). Bishop Kaller could be witness.

CASE 44. Common Pastoral Letters of the bishops in March and May 1936, and a Pastoral of the Bavarian bishops of June 1936, were forbidden and confiscated after having been read.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Voelkischer Beobachter No. 120, 29 April 1936 and The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 60-61.

CASE 45. On 1 September 1935, a Pastoral Letter of the Bishops Conference at Fulda was read publicly. It complained about the restrictions set on the freedom of the Church. It was confiscated in the

Ordinariates, in the printing offices, in bookshops and presbyteries. It was even removed from the credence tables of the churches by policemen. Catholics who had helped to circulate the Letter were arrested, as in Munich.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See The Persecutions of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 60.

CASE 46. A joint Pastoral Letter of the Bavarian bishops read of 13 December 1936 was not allowed to be published.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 61.

CASE 47. A Pastoral Letter of the Bishops conference expressing uneasiness about the future of the denominational schools, which was read on 20 September 1936, was not allowed to be published.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46.

CASE 48. A Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of Freiburg im Breisgau, Mgr. Groeber, could not be printed because the Gestapo insisted, contrary to the Concordat, on censoring the Diocesan Gazette.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Archbishop Groeber could be a witness.

CASE 49. A Pastoral Letter of 13 December 1936 by the Archbishop of Freiburg, describing the struggle to preserve the crucifix in its old place in the schools in Oldenburg was forbidden and in large measure confiscated before being read.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Archbishop Groeber could be a witness.

CASE 50. In February 1937 the Lenten Pastoral of Mgr. Kaller, Bishop of Ermland was forbidden and in large measure confiscated before being read. In many churches the confiscation took place during Mass itself by the police snatching the letter out of the hands of priests as they were in the act of reading it.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Bishop Kaller could be a witness.

CASE 51. The Pastoral Letter of the Bavarian bishops of 4 September 1938 was confiscated and forbidden to be read.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Cardinal Faulhaber could be a witness.

CASE 52. The Pastoral Letter of the Bishops Conference of Fulda on 19 August 1938 was confiscated and forbidden to be read. In the diocese of Rottenburg any parish priest who had read it was fined 30 RM. Duplicating machines were seized from several ordinariates.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Bishop Sproll could be a witness.

CASE 53. On 27 January 1937 the Minister of Public Instruction of the State of Baden prohibited the sale of the book "Truths of Catholicism" edited by the German Bishops Conference, with special reference to four questions judged "injurious to the state." One of these questions was question 34 which read: "Who alone has the ultimate right over our bodies and our health?" Answer: "God alone had the ultimate right over our bodies and our health."

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Archbishop Groeber could be a witness.

CASE 54. On 19 February 1936 the police of Munich confiscated the festival sermon in honor of the Pope preached by Cardinal Faulhaber.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Cardinal Faulhaber could be a witness.

CASE 55. In 1936 the Regensburg Catholic Sunday paper was suspended because it printed Bishop Buchberger's sermon on "The Threat to Catholic Faith."

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Bishop Buchberger could be a witness.

CASE 56. Early in 1937 the second and third series of the "Sermons of the Cardinal of Munich" were confiscated and destroyed by the police.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 46. Cardinal Faulhaber could be a witness.

CASE 57. On 20 July 1935 the Bishop of Muenster was forbidden to speak or give a blessing to a crowd of Catholics which shouted greetings to him in the streets of Hamm. The same thing happened to him on 8 November 1938 in Sterkrade.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (pages 253 and 261). Bishop Count Galen could be a witness.

b. Cases Involving the German Evangelical Church

CASE 58. In January 1935, Niemöller's memorandum "The State Church is Here" was confiscated by the Secret Police before it could be distributed.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Niemoeller himself could be a witness.

CASE 59. On 4 December 1935, Dr. Niemöller, Confessional leader, was forbidden to speak anywhere in the Reich.

EVIDENCE. Niemoeller himself could be a witness.

CASE 60. On Reformation Day, 31 October 1937, Bishop Marahrens, representing the leaders of the "intact" Landeskirchen, Pastor Müller of Dahlem, representing the Council of Brethren of the Confessional Church, and Dr. Breit of Munich, representing the Council of the Lutheran Churches of Germany, issued a declaration in which they protested against Rosenberg's demand that the German nation give up the Christian faith, and inquired whether the leadership of the Nazi Party intended to permit the churches to continue as places of worship, where the gospel of Christ could be preached without exposing preachers and hearers to the danger of being suspected as traitors and enemies of the state. Printed copies of this declaration were confiscated by the police. Parsonages all over Germany were searched. The printing shop of Köhler in Elberfeld, where the declaration had been printed, was closed.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Bishop Marahrens could be a witness.

CASE 61. On 21 February the Provisional Church Government (Confessional) issued a manifesto against the New Paganism of Alfred Rosenberg. When the Confessional pastors read this Manifesto from their pulpits, some 700 of them were arrested, 500 to be put in prison and 200 under house arrest. When the ministers continued nevertheless to read the Manifesto, fanatical Nazi governors made use of the concentration camp.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The members of the Provisional Church Government (Confessional) could be witnesses.

3. Interferences with the Educational Functions of the Clergy. Clerical participation in the processes of education had been a traditionally important means for the spreading of Christian doctrines and for the maintenance of Church influence. The National Socialists were interested in securing a monopoly on education for the propagation of their own aggressive philosophy. The campaign to eliminate the clergy from the educational field was therefore a major element in the persecution of the Christian Churches. The following were the principal elements of that campaign.

a. The Closing of Theological Seminaries. As educations for the teaching of the clergy itself, the seminaries are particularly important for the continuing influence and vitality of the Christian Churches. So far as the Catholic Church is concerned, this interest was recognized in the first sentence of Article 19 of the Concordat, which read: "Catholic theological faculties in State universities are to be maintained." In spite of this, the Nazis were eager to weaken and eliminate them as far as possible. Direct evidence of the Nazi attitude toward Catholic seminaries is provided in a recently captured Gestapo document (Top-secret Survey of the Fulda Bishops Synod, circulated by Heydrich in January, 1941, as published by the Supreme Headquarters, Psychological Warfare Division, Intelligence Section, Reference: DE 384/DIS 202) which gives the reduction of the educational level of the Catholic priesthood as a deliberate Nazi objective. The Nazi attitude can also be inferred from the following cases of suppression directed against Catholic and Protestant theological seminaries in all parts of Nazi controlled Europe.

i. Cases in Germany proper.

Case 62. At the third meeting of the Confessional Synod at Augsburg (4 June 1935) it was decided to avoid the contamination of Nazi theology by setting up independent theological seminaries for the training of the Confessional ministry. Establishments of this sort were set up at Elberfelde, Bielefeld, Naumberg, Finderwalde and Bloestau. From December 1936 onward these institutions were persistently searched and otherwise harried by the Gestapo, in an attempt to force them to close down.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The leading members of the Provisional Church Government (Confessional) could be witnesses. At that time they were Niemoller, Dibelius, Jacobi, and Asmusson, all Berlin pastors.

Case 63. In May 1939 the theological faculty of the University of Munich was closed. The Reich Minister for Public Instruction, Dr. Rust, appointed two professors who were decisively rejected by Cardinal Faulhaber. When Rust maintained his appointments, Faulhaber forbade the students to attend their lectures. Rust and Reich Minister for Church Affairs Kerrl replied by closing the University.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (page 51). Cardinal Faulhaber could be a witness.

Case 64. Early in 1939 the Theological Faculty in the University of Graz was closed. The lesser seminaries, in which those who aspire to the priesthood study the humanities before proceeding to the higher studies in philosophy and theology, were without exception closed down throughout the whole of Austria. The same fate befell the

lesser seminary in Mariaschein in the Sudeten district.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See case 63. Witness could be Bishop Pawlowski.

ii. Cases in the Incorporated Areas

Case 65. In 1938, by order of the Minister of the Interior in Vienna, the theological faculty at the University of Innsbruck was closed down. At the same time the Canisianum, the Seminary connected with this faculty, was shut.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. The Universe of 6 January 1939 published an eye witness report of an American student, given out by the NCWC News Service.

Case 66. In 1938 the theological faculty in Salzburg was closed down.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 63. Witness could be Archbishop Rohracher.

iii. Cases in the Occupied Areas.

Case 67. Early in March, 1944, the last remaining independent theological school in Norway, the Congregational Faculty in Oslo, was ordered closed by the Department of Church and Education. Simultaneously this department intensified its campaign to enlist students for a new course in theology designed to produce pro-Nazi clergymen in record time.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Reported by the Norwegian Information Service, 3516 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington 7, D. C. on 17 March 1944. Although the agency directly responsible was the Norwegian puppet government rather than the German occupying authority, the relations between the two were such that both can properly be held responsible. See separate study on Nazi occupation policies and methods.

This purpose was implemented by a systematic and protracted campaign, combining legal and illegal pressures.

Early in 1935 a sort of trial attack on the Catholic schools was staged in Munich with the result that at the beginning of school on 13 February only 65 percent of the children (as against 84 percent in 1934) were entered for denominational schools. Meetings of Catholic parents were forbidden.[1] Violent propaganda was immediately launched throughout the Reich. In some districts, such as the dioceses of Hildesheim and Paderborn, the authorities even dared to convert denominational schools into National Community Schools by decree and without consulting the parents.

The main assault, however, started in 1936. Attacks were concentrated against the many schools which were directed by religious orders, especially in the field of secondary education. The Catholic orders and congregations had altogether 12 secondary schools for boys and 188 for girls.[2]

Sixty-four percent of the Catholic girls attending secondary schools were studying at private Catholic institutions. Gradually these schools were eliminated. Nazi authorities exerted strong pressure on the Reich, state, and municipal officials to send their children only to public schools.[3]

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1. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich (page 119)
2. IBID (page 130)
3. Ordinance of the Reichministry of the Interior, September 1937. Quoted in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p.131. Direct citation not available here.

The main base from which pupils for the private schools were recruited was thus removed. It was further decided that the so-called preparatory classes would be suppressed.[1] Most private schools had derived the majority of their pupils from the preparatory classes of Catholic convent schools. Finally, the lower classes of the Catholic secondary schools were suppressed, a death sentence for the schools themselves.[2] In 1939 the Bavarian Ministry of Public Instruction forbade the clergy to exercise any function or activity in secondary schools.[3] In the official Gazette of the Reich Ministry of Education, early in 1937, a notice was published stating: "In about 400 public elementary schools for girls the instruction of the pupils was confined to Catholic religious orders or congregations of women. The dispersal of such teachers is provided for in the by-law of 16 November 1936 to the school Provision Law. Of about 1,600 teaching posts occupied by members of religious orders at the beginning of this year, 300 already have been made over to lay teachers. The remaining posts are to be vacated in the course of this year, so that the entire elimination of teachers belonging to religious orders is in prospect."[4]

1. Decree of the Minister of Education, 4 April 1936. Citation not available here.
2. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, page 130-131.
3. IBID, page 132.
4. IBID, page 135.

On 19 July 1938 the Ministry of Interior in Vienna deprived all the private schools in Austria of public recognition and rights.[1] The final closing of these schools followed almost immediately. Such famous institutions as the Schottengymnasium in Vienna, directed since the 13th century by members of the Benedictine Order and Stella Matutina, the Jesuit College in Feldkirch, were among those eliminated. By a decree issued in the summer of 1939, by the Minister of Education, all Catholic private schools, including mission schools, had to be closed down by April 1, 1940.

Meanwhile, the actual conversion of the denominational primary schools was carried out, either by means of the so-called "parents' vote" or by means of official ordinances. Controlling the parents' elections the Nazis converted most of the denominational schools in Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, and the districts of Trier and the Saar territory into National Community schools. Although they succeeded by propaganda and pressure in collecting vast majorities, they usually met with determined minorities among the parents and finally with private polls conducted among the faithful by Church authorities, which brought large majorities in favor of the maintenance of denominational schools.[2]

Therefore in 1938 and 1939, the Nazi fell back on the decree as a means of converting denominational schools into National Community schools. They started in the smaller states

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1. See The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 135.
2. IBID, p. 156.

like Oldenburg and in rural communities and finally extended over the whole of Greater Germany. At the time of the outbreak of the war, the abolition of the Catholic denominational schools was complete.[1]

c. Elimination of Religious Instruction From Other Schools. A certain amount of religious instruction was provided, for those who wished it, in the public schools of Germany under the Weimar Republic. The continuance of this system was guaranteed, so far as the Catholic Church is concerned, by Article 21 ("Catholic religious instruction in elementary, senior, secondary, and vocational schools constitutes a regular portion of the curriculum, and is to be taught in accordance with the principles of the Catholic Church".) and Article 22 ("With regard to the appointment of Catholic religious instructors, agreement will be arrived at as a result of mutual consultation on the part of the bishop and the government of the State concerned.") of the Concordat. In spite of this guarantee, steps were taken to eliminate instruction of this sort as rapidly as possible. The purpose of the Nazis was indicated in 14 June 1939 in a statement by Bauer, Munich city school inspector, who declared: "Religious instruction must disappear from the schools. We make our demand: Instruction in the German faith by German teachers in German schools. The man who is tied to the dogmas of the Churches need look for nothing from us in the future."[2]

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1. Nationalsozialistisches Bildungswesen No. 10, 1938 further evidence given in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pages 158-159.
2. Osservatore Romano, July 8, 1939.

Implementation of this objective started with the curtailment of religious instruction in the primary and secondary schools, with the squeezing of the religious periods into inconvenient hours, with Nazi propaganda among the teachers in order to induce them to refuse the teaching of religion, with vetoing of Catholic religious text books, and finally with substituting Nazi Weltanschauung and "German Faith" for Christian religious denominational instruction.[1] The name "religious instruction" was maintained, but its aims were completely altered. At the time of the outbreak of the war denominational religious instruction had practically disappeared from Germany's primary schools.

D. Interference with Christian Organizations.

Much of the work of the Christian Churches has been done through organizations existing along the regular ecclesiastical hierarchy. Dissolution of the political organizations favored by the Churches, such as the Catholic dominated Center and Bavarian People's parties was demanded from the outset by the Nazi regime as part of its general policy of eliminating all political organizations other than the Nazi party.[2] The right of other Church organizations to exist and operate was guaranteed, however, so far as the Catholic Church is concerned, by Article 31 of the Concordat, which read: "Those Catholic organizations and societies which pursue exclusively charitable,

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1. Given in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pages 163-186.
2. See Norkenbach, pages 265, 268, 274.

cultural and religious ends, and as such are placed under the ecclesiastical authorities, will be protected in their institutions and activities. Those Catholic organizations which to their religious, cultural and charitable pursuits add others, such as social or professional interests, even though they may be brought into national organizations, are to enjoy the protection of Article 31 Section I, provided they guarantee to develop their activities outside all political parties." The significance of this enactment was underlined on 7 July 1933 in a statement by Adolf Hitler himself: "The conclusion of the Concordat between the Holy See and the German Government appears to me to give sufficient guarantee that the Roman Catholic citizens of the Reich will from now on put themselves wholeheartedly at the service of the new National Socialist State. I therefore decree: (1) The dissolution, carried out without directions from the Central Government, of such Catholic organizations as are recognized by the present treaty, is to be cancelled immediately. (2) All measures taken against clerical and other leaders of these Catholic organizations are to be annulled. Any repetition of such measures will in future be unlawful and will be punished through the normal legal procedure."[1] In spite of these assurances, attempts to cripple or suppress the activities of Church organizations, both Catholic and Protestant, was quickly begun. Thus after the occupation of Austria all Catholic associations

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1. See Norkenbach, p. 278.

there were dissolved.[1] In Germany proper similar results were produced, though more gradually. The organizations particularly affected were the following:

1. Religious Orders. The position of religious orders was specifically guaranteed by Article 15 Section 1 of the Concordat, which read: "Religious orders and congregations are not subject to any special restrictions on the part of the state, either as regards their foundation, the erection of their various establishments, their number, the selection of members...pastoral activity, education, care of the sick and charitable work, or as regards their affairs and the administration of their property." They were also protected by Article 13, which read: "Catholic parishes, parish and diocesan societies, episcopal sees, bishoprics and chapters, religious orders and congregations, as well as institutions, foundations, and property which are under the administration of ecclesiastical authority, shall retain or acquire respectively legal competence in the civil domain according to the general prescriptions of civil law. They shall remain publicly recognized corporations insofar as they have been such hitherto. Similar rights may be granted to the remainder in accordance with those provisions of the law which apply to all." There are many cases in which these guarantees were violated.

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1. Diocesan Gazette Linz No. 5, 1938.

a. Interferences With Religious Orders in Germany Proper.

CASE 68. On April 1935 the Bavarian Political Police published a "strictly confidential" circular to all police headquarters in Bavaria concerning "Security measures against the Jesuits." In this ordinance supervision of all lectures given by members of the Company of Jesus in Bavaria is requested; public meetings held by Jesuits are to be prevented by all means, private ones to be watched. "The Jesuits are instigating systematic and far-reaching activities in Bavaria to undermine the Reich and bring contempt even on the Führer himself. In various semi-scientific lectures the philosophic principles of National Socialism are submitted to an acrimonious criticism which is nothing more or less than disguised incitement against the Reich. These lectures, moreover, are so ambiguously and cunningly composed that a judicial punishment of the lecturer is possible in only very few cases." The Political Police ordered, therefore, that statements injurious to the State be ruthlessly punished by "protective custody" (i.e. the concentration camp).

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Document published in the Elsässischer Kurier of May 17, 1935, reprinted in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 64.

CASE 70. The Franciscan Friary of Kolheim in the Rhineland was closed in 1939 because thirty bottles of wine or cordial were found on the premises, as well as butter and fat given to the friars by the Catholic population of the district, and some sixty packets of cigars and cigarettes.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. Press reports quoted in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 45.

CASE 71. The Franciscan Friary of Hadamar in the Westerwald mountains were closed, following Gestapo allegations that the conditions there showed "shocking immorality".

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See Case 70.

b. Interferences with Religious Orders in the Incorporated Areas.

CASE 72. In 1939 the Missions Institute of St. Ruprecht in Kreuzberg (Salzburg) was dissolved by the Nazi authorities and the three houses of the society of Christ the King in former Austrian territory were closed and its property confiscated. In the same year the old Austrian abbeys of Goettweig, Admont, and Engelzell were finally appropriated, and all the leased property of the foundation of Klosterneuburg near Vienna was taken over by the Government. The Feldkirchner Hof, a hostel of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Feldkirchen near Klagenfurt, was also confiscated by the Gestapo.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See CASE 70.

CASE 73. In Austria in the course of 1938, by order of Reich Commissar Buerckel the property of various religious orders was seized. Among the groups affected were the German Order of Knights, whose property was taken over by the state; the nuns of Eggenberg, near Graz; the teaching nuns at Mariazel, who lost their school buildings and also their rest home, the Marienheim; the Benedictine foundation of St. Lamprecht; the Franciscan friars in Salzburg, who were driven out of a government building placed at their disposal; and the Cistercians of Mehrerau in Voralberg, whose buildings were taken for a state

youth home.

THE PROBLEM OF PROOF. See CASE 70.

2. The Youth Movement. One of the principal means whereby the various Christian Churches exerted influence over the youth of Germany was through the activities of the various Christian youth organizations. As rivals to the Hitler Jugend they were particularly obnoxious to the National Socialist authorities, who sought to abolish them completely. On December 17, 1933 this was effectively accomplished so far as the Protestant Church was concerned by the order of Reich Bishop Müller, who placed the entire Evangelical Youth Movement, with more than 700,000 members, under the leadership of Baldur von Schirach, leader of the Hitler Youth[1]. Although the Catholic Youth movement was protected by Article 31 of the Concordat, the campaign for its destruction was rapidly begun. As early as January 1934 the staff leader of the Hitler Youth, Lauterbacher, declared in Koblenz: "The Hitler Youth will not compromise but will go on its own way, which must necessarily lead to the destruction of all other youth organizations."[2] On 27 March 1934 the Reich Youth Leader, Baldur von Schirach declared: "The incorporation of the Protestant Youth associations will some time or other be followed, and necessarily followed, by that

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1 See Harkenbach pp. 693-694
2 Koelnische Volkszeitung, 14 January 1934.

of the Catholic Youth. At a time when all are abandoning their private interests, Catholic youth no longer has any right to lead a separate existence."[1]

These declarations heralded a difficult period for the Catholic Youth Associations, which tried with all means of diplomacy and endurance to retain their rights as guaranteed by the Concordat, confirmed in the decree of Hitler, and now curtailed almost daily through new restrictions and persecutions. A decree of Schirach forbade on 30 July 1933 simultaneous membership in the Hitler Youth and in denominational youth organizations[2]. Two years later all activity which was not of purely ecclesiastical or religious nature was forbidden to denominational youth associations. Every method of propaganda and coercion was employed in order to bring all German youngsters into the Hitler Youth and to prevent them from joining denominational organizations. Finally the Catholic Youth associations were simply forbidden in entire districts of the Reich[3]. Physical terrorization did the rest. The number of incidents increased rapidly, and the police and courts were always on the side of the Hitler Youth.[4] By 1938, in almost all districts of the Reich, the Catholic Youth Associations had been dissolved.

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1 Schlesische Volkszeitung March 29, 1934.
2 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich p. 84
3 Ibid p. 108
4 Ibid pp. 91-108

3. Other Church Organizations. Like the youth organizations, those of a professional character for adults, such as the Catholic Workers Associations and the Catholic Journeymen Associations, were the first to be put under almost unbearable pressure. Dr. Ley, head of the German Labor Front, forbade simultaneous membership in the Labor Front and in denominational professional organizations, which was tantamount to the loss of one's job[1]. After some years of desperate struggle, these Catholic organizations too were forbidden, district by district. Numerous other Catholic organizations ended by self-dissolution; e.g., the Catholic Teachers Organization, the Catholic student fraternities, and the organizations of their alumni. Others shared the fate of the youth and workers organizations. Among these were the Association of Catholic Women Teachers, the Catholic Civil Servants Union, the Albertus Magnus Union for the Support of Catholic Students, the Christian Union of German Railwaymen.

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1 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich pp. 187-199

VI. ORGANIZATIONS BEARING PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERSECUTIONS

As a necessary step in preparation for the National Socialist scheme of world conquest, the persecution of the Christian Churches becomes part of the responsibility of all those who participated in that scheme. Responsibility for specific criminal acts can be assigned to certain individuals and groups in connection with the specific acts of persecution described in the preceding section. There are also certain groups, which, because of their central position in the planning and execution of Nazi Church policies, may be ascribed a more general responsibility for the persecution as a whole. The more important of these groups are the following.

A. The Reich Bishop and Spiritual Council of the German Evangelical Church

Prior to the creation of the Reich Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs on 19 July 1935, the Reich Bishop, Ludwig Müller, and his chosen collaborators on the Spiritual Council (Forsthoff of Koblenz, Engelke of Hamburg and Otto Weber of Göttingen), played the principal part in the persecution of German protestantism. The sweeping nature of their powers and responsibilities is set forth in the legislation cited above

(p. 19-23). The illegality of measures taken by their authority in Bavaria was attested by a civil court decision of 28 October 1934.

B. The Reich Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs

From the time of its creation of 19 July 1935, this Ministry was the principal agency for the persecution of the German Evangelical Church. From 1935 to 1941 the position of Reichsminister was held by Hanns Kerrl. Thereafter Muhs headed the ministry as acting minister. The sweeping nature of its powers and responsibilities is set forth in the legislation cited above (p. 23-26). Through the Beschlussstelle, transferred to it from the Reich Ministry of the Interior on 27 July 1935, it exercised supreme judicial power over the Churches, and thus prevented any test of the legality of its actions being taken before the ordinary courts.[1] Although relatively little concerned with the management of Catholic affairs, the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs was officially associated with a number of acts in violation of the Concordat. Its responsibility for persecution in the annexed areas was the subject of a memorial of protest addressed to it, and other authorities, by the Catholic bishops at Fulda on 27 July 1935.

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[1] As of 1943, the personnel of the Beschlussstelle was as follows:
Chairman: Muhs
Legal members: Dr. Weber (Berlin)
Dr. Dahm (Kiehl)
Members representing the Ministry:
Dr. Stahn, Ministerialdirigent
Dr. Ruppel, Ministerialrat
Haugg, Landgerichtsrat

C. The Church Chancery of the German Evangelical Church

As chief legal and administrative department of the German Evangelical Church, the Church Chancery played a leading part both in the earlier and in the later phases of the persecution of the German Evangelical Church. In 1934 Dr. Jäger, as head of the Church Chancery, was a principal collaborator of Reich Bishop Müller, and gave the orders for the acts of persecution in Bavaria subsequently declared illegal. On 20 March 1937 the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs delegated its powers of administration over the Evangelical Church to Dr. Werner, president of the Church Chancery[1]. This delegation was made permanent on 10 December 1937[2]. On 8 March 1938 all the provincial churches were forbidden by Werner to make any regulations except in matters of faith or worship without his consent[3]. Clearly this was one of the principal agencies of National Socialist Control over the German Evangelical Church.

D. Finance Departments of the German Evangelical Church

By ordinances of 10 and 29 June 1937, state controlled finance departments were set up for the German Evangelical Church and for each of the Provincial Churches, with full power

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1 RGBl. I (1937) p.333.
2 RGBl. I (1937) p.1346
3 Citation unavailable here.

to make regulations with force of law concerning the condition of service of all officials of the general Church administrations, pastors and other Church officials. These departments were responsible to the Ministry of Church Affairs, and were its principal agency in the maintenance of financial controls over the German Evangelical Church. (See above, pp. 34-36). The chairmanship of the Financial Department of the Chancery of the German Evangelical Church was held first by Dr. Werner, later by Dr. Coelle.

E. Reich Education Ministry

Principal agency for measures against the Protestant and Catholic churches in the field of education.

F. Reich Propaganda Ministry

As chief agency for the control of Nazi propaganda, it bears chief responsibility for the systematic campaign of defamination waged against the German clergy. (See above p. 51). It was also the direct agency for the issuance of certain orders for the censorship of Church publications. (See above pp. 60-61). Sections or persons particularly responsible for carrying out this phase of the work of the Ministry cannot be determined here.

G. Reich Ministry of the Interior

Prior to the creation of the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior was the principal agency for direct government action in Church affairs. Certain orders

curtailing freedom of discussion were directly issued by it during this period. From 26 June to 27 July 1935 the Beschlusstelle was located in this ministry. Since the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs had no executive agents of its own, its orders were carried out primarily through the police forces controlled by the Reich Ministry of the Interior, or by its dependent organs, the Ministries of the Interior of the several Länder. Among the ministries most compromised in this connection were those of Bavaria, Wurttemberg and, in the period following the Anschluss, of Austria. Sections or persons particularly responsible for carrying out this phase of the work of the several Ministries cannot be determined here.

H. The Gestapo

Among the police forces at the disposal of the various ministries of the interior for the carrying out of acts of persecution, the political police were naturally, in view of the political nature of the issue, the favorite agents. Evidence of their use is to be found throughout the specific instances of persecution presented in Section V above. Sections or persons particularly responsible for this phase of Gestapo activities cannot be determined here.

J. The German Christians

The important part played by this group, particularly in the earlier phases of the persecution of the German Evangelical

Church is set forth above. (pp. 19-23). The head of the association "German Christians" to 1938 was Dr. Rehm. Since 1938 the name has been changed to "Luther Christians", and the headship was assumed by Dr. Petersmann.

K. The SS, the SA and the Hitler Youth

Acts of intimidation and violence taken against the clergy and laity, insofar as they were not entrusted to the police itself, were largely left in the hands of these organizations. Instances in which the planned nature of these demonstrations can best be shown are presented above, (pp. 42-6 &/ 50. The Hitler Youth was also particularly active in the breaking up of the Church youth movements, and in the work of anti-Church indoctrination of German young people. (See above pp. 82-83). Sections or persons particularly responsible for this phase of their activities cannot be determined here.

L. The German Occupation Authorities in Norway and Poland

Evidence presented above in Section V shows that these were the occupied regions in which the persecution of the Christian Churches was most severe. Sections or persons of the occupation regimes which were particularly responsible for this phase of their work cannot be determined here.